Carbon pricing can't stand alone; Is shifting to a carbon tax smart policy, or just politics? Cohn, Dec. 9

The Toronto Star

December 12, 2017 Tuesday

Copyright 2017 Toronto Star Newspapers Limited

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A14

Length: 289 words

Body

Is shifting to a carbon tax smart policy, or just politics? Cohn, Dec. 9

To be clear, carbon fee and dividend, or revenue-neutral carbon tax, is a well-established and well-known approach to pricing carbon.

In order to be effective at rapidly reducing carbon emissions, a carbon price has to be high and has to rise steeply - so quickly and steeply that returning revenues to citizens is the only way that it can be socially sustainable and just. In some approaches, the tax is fully revenue neutral; in others, a portion is retained for investment in infrastructure to support a rapid and just transition to a lower-impact way of life.

However, carbon pricing cannot stand alone: it needs to be supported by a responsible environmental review process; by the elimination of all subsidies to polluting industries; by trade policies such as border adjustments; and by investment in infrastructure that supports low-emissions energy production, transportation and healthy agriculture.

Carbon tax is not new and untested - it has been tried before, in both Australia and in B.C. It was effective in Australia at reducing emissions, before a change in government did away with it. In B.C., a (not quite revenue-neutral, approximately 73 per cent returned to taxpayers) carbon tax has also been effective in reducing emissions. But even if it were new, there is little reason to accept Martin Regg Cohn's assertion that this invalidates it - everything, including the industry-friendly cap and trade, is new before we try it, and in the urgency for climate justice, we need to engage fully in action, employing new and old, in reconnecting with each other and the planet, marshalling all our funds and energies for change.

Rebecca Weigand, Toronto

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: COLUMN

Publication-Type: NEWSPAPER

Subject: CARBON TAX (94%); CLIMATE ACTION (90%); EMISSIONS (90%); POLLUTION MONITORING,

PREVENTION & REMEDIATION (90%); PRICES (90%); REPORTS, REVIEWS & SECTIONS (79%); EMISSIONS CREDITS (78%); ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (78%); POLLUTION (78%); PRICE MANAGEMENT (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (78%); INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT (77%); SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION (75%); AGRICULTURAL TRADE (73%); GREENHOUSE GASES (72%); SUSTAINABILITY (70%); INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION (68%); EDITORIALS & OPINIONS (59%)

Industry: CARBON TAX (94%); EMISSIONS (90%); TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE (90%); EMISSIONS CREDITS (78%); PRICE MANAGEMENT (78%); SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION (75%); AGRICULTURAL TRADE (73%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (73%)

Geographic: ONTARIO, CANADA (58%); AUSTRALIA (92%)

Load-Date: December 12, 2017